

INTERMEDIATE GROUP

Fill in the blanks with the appropriate form of the verbs.

WHO OWNS NATURE ANYWAY?

In recent years, innovations in computer technology, in genetic engineering and in other areas of biology (1) have been promoting (promote) a different kind of search for gold in the forests and mountains of the tropics. The excitement that (2) is now sending (now/send) the fortune hunters into the Third World arises from a dream, which is more important than money — a dream of living longer and better. The key to making that dream a reality lies in these remote locations, where most of the world's plants and animals (3) are found (find). Here is where the link between nature and human health begins. This can be seen in the great number of prescription drugs that (4) are believed (believe) to be based on only 40 plant species. The goal is to discover far more sources in nature for easing human suffering medically, but so far fewer than 1% of the world's 265,000 known flowering plants (5) have been tested (test) for their curative powers.

The bio-detectives aiming to improve our lives are everywhere. An example case (6) is seen (see) in rural Mexico. There, tireless researchers who (7) are equipped (equip) with laptops, backpacks and tools are taking the saliva of vampire bats and clinically testing it for a substance that might dissolve blood clots*. Elsewhere in India, botanists (8) are spending (spend) time with Irula tribesmen to determine which berries and plants (9) are used (use) to cure cobra bites.

have been targeted
In fortune hunters' search for excitement in the Third World, human beings (10) have been targeted (target), too. Isolated tribes (11) are searched (search) for their resistance to certain diseases. Four years ago, in the Philippines, U.S. scientists (12) were accused (accuse) of collecting DNA samples from groups of people who (13) were known (know) for their immunity to cancer and diabetes. Similarly, last year in China, a study that (14) was conducted (conduct) by Duke University on 10,000 elderly Beijing residents (15) caused (cause) unpleasant accusations of "stealing secrets of longevity." Such local sensitivity is sure to increase in the future.

The new frontiers in drug development are not just limited to the tropics. In the Western scientific community, hopeful discoverers (16) have been investigating (investigate) ever deeper into the mysteries of the human genome. As they discover more about us, progress (17) is reflected (reflect) in newspaper reports. Almost every day, there is an account of one scientist who (18) has uncovered (uncover) another secret of DNA.

Naturally, all of us want to gain from the results of this research. For example, by means of new treatments, many lives (19) will be saved (save) and prolonged in the following decades. However, the disturbing question is: How long can the biosystem, which (20) has already been damaged (already/damage), resist such thoughtless acts? Nowadays, a complex global battle (21) is shaping up (shape up) over the ownership of nature's medically valuable resources. The contest puts multinational companies against ecologists and social activists, and governments against their own tribal people. These conflicts (22) are raising (raise) an ethical dilemma: Should a government, company or scientist have the right to claim ownership of living organisms? Wouldn't it be like selling a creation of God?

In addition, according to radical activists, the activities of the big drug companies in the developing world are the modern version of the old colonial system. Just as in the past, the local inhabitants (23) are not provided (not/provide) with much benefit. Today, this view (24) is shared (share) by many officials in two major countries; China and India. Both societies are proud of their traditions of natural medicine which (25) dates (date) back thousands of years, and the governments are

protective of their populations' genetic "property." If such concerns (26) are allowed (allow) to develop into a situation where national gene pools (27) are protected (protect) as a secret, everyone (28) will suffer (suffer) in terms of the lost opportunities for a healthier life.

Big drug companies (29) are hated (hate) by many for wanting to make money, but who else has the resources to pour the billions of dollars that (30) are needed (need) to come up with, say, a new cancer drug? Even worse, it (31) is claimed (claim) that only one in 10,000 compounds actually makes it to pharmacies. Furthermore, getting to that point can take eight to twelve years and 350 million dollars. On the other side, however, are those who say that the drug companies (32) have been stealing (steal) our biosphere treasures for too long, and now they (33) have recently added (recently/add) interfering with the DNA structure to their efforts at making larger profits. Until some arrangement (34) is worked out (work out) to bring these two perspectives together, the world's indigenous peoples may decide to keep their secrets to themselves.

clot (n): A thick, almost solid mass formed when blood or milk dries.